

From: vanbalen@sesquipedalian.wcomnet.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/16/01 6:09pm
Subject: settlement doesn't do enough

I believe Ralph Nader and James Love's open letter (<http://www.cptech.org/at/ms/rnj12kollarkotellynov501.html>) does a good job of expressing my concerns about the settlement reached with Microsoft.

I especially believe that any settlement must free consumers from being required to use Microsoft software. To this end, I believe that Microsoft's proprietary protocols and file formats (i.e. the .doc format used by Word, and other office software file formats, as well as protocols such as SMB/CIFS). Consumers currently must either use Microsoft's office suite or products with, by far, inferior support for the .doc file format in order to view documents that the vast majority of computer users currently create. This has been going on long enough that Microsoft has practically eradicated all other office suites formerly available for the Windows operating system.

See also Andrew Tridgell's concerns that the settlement will allow Microsoft to continue withholding information about the SMB/CIFS protocol (http://linuxtoday.com/news_story.php3?ltsn=2001-11-06-005-20-OP-MS).

The restrictions set on what Microsoft can require OEM vendors to do or not do is a step in the right direction but not near enough, especially now that there are very few companies in a position to take advantage of these changes. This may have worked well several years ago, but I doubt that it would be very effective today.

I urge you to take Mr. Nader and Mr. Love's comments, as well as the concerns I have expressed above seriously when reviewing the settlement.

Sincerely,
David B. van Balen